

ROMANS CHAPTER ELEVEN – Introductory Remarks

Any exposition of Romans chapter 11 must begin at chapter 9, verse 1 in order to cover this portion of Scripture that the Holy Ghost is giving through the Apostle Paul to the election of God, the Spiritual Israel of God. Here the Apostle expresses agony over the rejection of Israel after the flesh, not the Israel of 11:26. He is confident in the promises of God to spiritual Israel. We are told that these promises were not made to the earthly nation. The Holy Ghost gives us a totally *new* concept of Israel. Not all are Israel who are of Israel. “Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. FOR THEY ARE NOT ALL ISRAEL WHICH ARE OF ISRAEL.” There are *two Israels*. Notice the use of “all Israel” and compare that with the text in Romans 11:26: “all Israel shall be saved,” which is the keystone text of the Premillennial structure. We agree, but *which* Israel? Israel after the flesh is rejected (blinded), and elect Israel receives its sight by the free grace of God.

Look at the conclusion drawn from Romans 9:7 by the analogy of Abraham’s two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael, although born of the Egyptian bondwoman Hagar, was as much the child of Abraham as was Isaac. We read: “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they called children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called” (Rom.9:7). Paul is pursuing an allegory, as he also did when used of the Holy Ghost to write to the Galatians (4:22-31). He is treating *Ishmael* as the representative of *all Israel after the flesh*, though in fact no Jew was descended from Hagar’s son. *Isaac* is the representative of *all Israel after the Spirit*, though these include a great majority of Gentiles who in fact were never descended from Isaac. This is an indisputable fact as to the meaning as the next verse proves. “That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; But the children of promise are counted for the seed” (Rom. 9:8).

As in the allegory of Gal. 4 there is a definite distinction between the two Israels, based on the PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF ABRAHAM’S TWO SONS. Ishmael represents Israel after the flesh, to whom no promises are made and who are not considered as the Seed of Abraham at all. The other (Isaac) represents Israel after the Spirit, the true church of God, the elect who are written in heaven, and these—Jew and Gentile together—are the true seed of Abraham to whom the promises are made.

Our opposing friends who triumphantly, but erroneously, think the sentence, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” proves that an earthly privilege belongs to Jewry as the natural seed of Abraham to whom the promises have been made are guilty of confusing flesh and spirit. They deprive God’s true church of every significant prophecy in the Word of God and reduce the present status of the church to that of a mere interruption in the purpose of God.

Compare the statement of Paul’s inspired utterance in Romans 9 with what he has already said in Romans 4:16, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to ALL THE SEED: not to that only which is of the law (i.e. the Jew), but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham who is the father of us all (i.e. Jew and gentile).” We wave that banner before our opponents showing that ALL THE SEED IS ALL ISRAEL which is to be saved.

The apostle obliterates the distinction between Jew and Gentile in the gospel, and thereby makes it impossible to reestablish that distinction without assailing the foundation of the gospel.

Test the God-given doctrine of Paul where we will, we find that “ALL THE SEED” and “ALL ISRAEL” mean “THE ELECTION OF GRACE.” Romans 11:26 is no different as we shall see when we come to it.

The Scriptures next give the example of the birth of Esau and Jacob (Rom. 9:10-13), the two sons of Isaac and Rebecca, and attribute the rejection of the elder son and the preference of the younger to God’s free election. Two things are being demonstrated: Firstly, a large section (Esau) of Abraham’s natural seed is SEPARATED from the PROMISE and REJECTED from the INHERITANCE, THOUGH THEY ARE AS MUCH THE NATURAL DECENDANTS OF ABRAHAM AS ANY JEW EVER BORN. Secondly, the true seed is determined not by natural birth but by ELECTION, ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF A SOVEREIGN GOD, and consists of all the redeemed, Jew or Gentile.

The Scriptures are doing much more than distinguishing between Israel after the flesh and prophetic Israel. Here we see the introduction of the doctrine of ETERNAL ELECTION, being applied not merely to a distinction amongst Abraham’s natural descendants (elect Jews and non-elect Jews), but to our Lord’s eternal choice of the entire body of the redeemed in all ages, both before and after Abraham. Read, heed and bow to God’s conclusion in Rom. 9:24, “Even us whom He has called, NOT OF THE JEWS ONLY BUT ALSO OF THE GENTILES.” Until one comes to grips with this he is not prepared to tackle Romans 11.

In the words of another, “Paul views the whole panorama of redemption in one grand historic sweep. He adduces the example of Pharaoh to show the sovereign liberty of God in hardening the hearts of proud and impenitent men that they might fall into the destruction their sins have incurred, while at the same time the Judgment which falls upon them magnifies the power of God so that His Name is declared throughout all the earth.” “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth” (Rom. 9:18).

Jacob is loved and Esau is hated (vs.13); Pharaoh is hardened (vs. 17); it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy (vs. 16); let no man question the right of God to act as He does: “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” (vs. 20 & 21).

Let us bow before Him as we are in the region of the eternal purposes of God, fixed in the Divine Counsel and wisdom before the foundation of the world. This eternal purpose of redemption, the redemption of God’s elect, chosen not according to their will but according to the Divine will, is the dominating object of all prophecy. This is the Kingdom of Grace and the Covenant of Grace which is the central feature of the Word of God. This is what God has all along been working to. He invaded history, selected one man (Abraham) to become the channel through which His historic purpose must be worked out; selects and divides among his seed, according to His pleasure, rejecting some, in the vastness of His wise designs, giving no account of His matters to any, being answerable to none in any of His mighty and eternal acts, making of the same lump of human clay some to honor and some to dishonor, rejecting entire segments and nearly whole generations of Israelitish people, so that unless He had reserved to Himself a remnant according to the election of grace, the whole nation would numerous times have become altogether as Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9:23).

The Scriptures clearly teach that the Jew is *not* Abraham's Seed. Perish the thought that the inheritance was to Abraham as such or to the Jew as such. The inheritance is to Christ and Christ alone. The Seed is not the Jew but the SEED IS CHRIST (Gal. 3:16)—“And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

In pursuing His sovereign purpose to glorify Christ and give Him a seed in which He, the Eternal Son, should be eternally glorified and satisfied (Isa. 53:10-12), the Father in due time sent the Son according to promise, to “save His people from their sins,” and they realize the promise IN CHRIST. That means that God sent Christ not only to be the Savior of one race of people who were the natural descendants of Abraham, but to save His elect to the ends of the earth, in a Kingdom of Grace which should know no boundaries, ethnic or geographic, but be composed of an election of grace drawn from all the world, neither Jew nor Greek, but all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). The following verse drives this home: “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The idea of our opponents that God in working out His purpose would return to the narrow limits of *one nation* composed of those who claim *natural* descent from Abraham, is abhorrent to the New Testament, and a total denial of the nature of the Kingdom Christ came to establish. It is also abhorrent to the Old Testament prophets, when they are Scripturally understood.

The Jew served a temporary purpose in the plan of the Sovereign God until Christ came. They were privileged to bear the ordinances, exhibit the covenant, and be the custodian of the Word of God. At no time was the earthly nation a converted people. In no generation were there many of them that were really saved, the true children of Abraham. The same is true today. The Jew in Israel is for the most part an agnostic. The Word of God and the Kingdom of God have been taken from them and given to an *elect nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:43), “Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” See 1 Peter 2:9 for the identity of that holy nation.

Paul's doctrine that the Jewish phase of the Divine dealing has passed from the earthly nation to a new spiritual nation composed of Jew and Gentile, indifferent as to birth, and irrelevant as to genealogical descent, is reinforced by a number of quotations from the prophets. These quotations show the validity of Gentile salvation outside the law and nation of Israel, and they also lay down THE RULE OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION. That rule is the spiritualization of Israel into its final form as the Church of regenerated Jew and Gentile. This is clear from Paul's first quotation, which is taken from the prophet Hosea: “I will call them my people which are not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God” (Rom. 9:25-26 — from Hosea 1:10 and 2:23).

We quote from a deceased brother, “Hosea and Solomon's Song. Hosea has always been regarded as THE FIRST OF THE WRITING PROPHETS. There had been an interregnum since the great days of Elijah and Elisha who worked miracles but did not write books. Now there came, in the twilight years of the Dual Kingdom of Israel and Judah, when the two were hastening on to the awful calamities which befell them in the days of the kings of Assyria and Babylon, a period of tremendous prophetic activity. Great prophets were contemporary with each other, overlapped each other; one third of the Old Testament was written in a few generations during which the prophetic voice was never silent.

“Hosea began where the Song of Solomon left off. Israel, the bride of the Lord, is about to be beaten in the streets of the city (S of S 5:2-7). She awakens in the dark night of her soul to despise the voice of Christ. She wanders into the streets. The watchmen—the prophets of the Lord—find her and chastise her with words of solemn denunciation and warning. Her veil is taken away. That judgment overtakes her, which is only a prelude to the greater judgment when in fact the Heavenly Bridegroom comes to earth, is despised and rejected, comes to His own but His own receive Him not, is crucified and slain, and through His death of deaths and glorious resurrection brings in a new order. The Church enters the full blaze of the gospel day. She is released from the bondage of dead works and identification with the rotting corpse of carnal Israel, and emerges from the tomb, raised again with Christ, a new and holy people, endowed with all the promised graces and mercies which the old Israel despised.”

THE CHURCH IS THE LAWFUL SUCCESSOR OF ISRAEL; INDEED SHE IS THE ONLY ISRAEL THOUGH COMPOSED FOR THE MOST PART OF THAT ELECT SEED FROM THE GENTILES WHICH TRACES NO NATURAL DESCENT FROM ABRAHAM. Her words are, “Doubtless thou art our father though Abraham be ignorant of us and Israel acknowledge us not” (Isaiah 63:16).

We quote our brother again: “HOSEA’S MARRIAGE THAT NEVER WAS. After Solomon in his mystic and mysterious Song of Songs, Hosea takes up the theme. He becomes in himself the bridegroom, just as Solomon before him. He speaks in the name of Christ; is involved in marriage with a mystic woman who is an adulteress. That woman is earthly Israel. The children of the adulterous wife, who are born to the prophet in spirit, are the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. They are given the names Jezreel, Lo Ammi and Lo Ruhamah to denote their utter and final rejection. Jezreel, with slight modifications of the Hebrew orthography, is Israel, as anyone acquainted with the language sees at a glance. Jezreel is associated with the apostasy of Ahab, the destruction of his house by Jehu, and the appalling failure of Jehu’s house, now to be judged in its turn in the person of its last representative, Jeroboam II, who was on the throne at the time Hosea began to prophesy (Hosea 1:1). Lo Ammi means, as the chapter explains, ‘Not my people.’ Lo Ruhamah is, ‘No longer mercy.’

“The last two verses of the chapter are a vision of the true Israel expanded into a number which cannot be measured (Rev. 7:9). Paul spiritualizes this in Romans 9 and says it is the election of grace, Jew and Gentile.”

Let our opponents wrestle with this passage in Hosea. Let them ponder over the Divine commentary upon it in Romans 9:24-26. Let them humbly face the conclusion, and accept the downfall of their prophetic edifice, for the Israel which is to be restored even as the sands of the sea in multitude is *not* the earthly Israel, but the heavenly, the Church of the Redeemed, Jew and Gentile together. These are they who are contemptuously thrust aside by the earthly Israel as not being the people of God and not being in the field of Divine mercy.

Hengstenberg warns us that the term “Israel” in Scripture is very subtle and may not be understood but by careful and painstaking study and spiritual receptiveness, which alas, most present-day commentators do not possess.

Again quoting, “Before we leave Hosea, we take the opportunity of refuting the absurd theory that Hosea actually contracted a marriage—two in fact—which were in their nature adulterous. The marriage of Hosea to Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (1 verse 3), was in prophetic vision only. There was never a woman named Gomer. Her name and that of her father

Dibliam contain a subtlety which is beyond most commentators. Gomer is Israel, and Diblaim is Ephraim, and in the second chapter the visionary marriage of the prophet disappears altogether, and is lost entirely as it merges into the marriage of Jehovah with adulterous Israel.

“Brethren, let us speak plainly. The adulterous wife is the earthly people. God breaks the marriage and divorces the wicked nation, and there appears in her place the true bride, the mystic Israel, the Church of the Redeemed and the Firstborn. Let us not haggle, but rejoice in the rapture of that sovereign grace which has made us His and made Him ours for ever and for ever.”

If our opponents would only discard their prejudices for a moment and consider in these terms the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out, they would discover the true wealth of the Word of God and much preaching would be transformed in our land. God’s people would no longer get stones for bread, or the front page of the newspaper as exposition of God’s Divine Revelation which the surface and literal theologians are incapable of understanding.

Paul continues through chapter 9 of Romans quoting from Isaiah to assure us that it was always the subject of prophecy that Israel would be rejected as a nation, a remnant only of them saved, and the Gentiles admitted in their room, to eternal salvation as promised to Abraham. Hosea’s doctrine lays the foundation for all the writing prophets. His definition of Israel must be accepted as the key to all that the subsequent writers have to say upon the same theme. The Isaiah quotation at the end of Romans 9 confirms the calling of an elect nation, Jew and Gentile, as the true Israel of God.

From these Isaiah passages Paul teaches (Rom. 9:30-33) that the Gentiles have attained to the blessing of free justification by faith, while the earthly Israel has fallen on the stumbling stone of Christ’s righteousness imputed to true believers. Observe how Paul proves everything by appeal to the O.T. Scriptures. Yet our futuristic friends tell us the Church is not found in O.T. Prophecy.

Read through the 10th chapter, noting as we go how Paul disavows any hostile feelings toward unbelieving Israel and professes his prayerful concern in regards to their salvation. There, however, is nowhere to be found the error that the Jew has any precedence over the heathen in the matter of the grace of God. On the contrary God is rich in mercy to all poor sinners who call upon Him, for “WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED” (Rom. 10:11-13). He leaves the earthly people to ponder over the judgment of God in their rejection, by closing the chapter with references from the prophets to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the righteous condemnation of unbelieving Israel. ¶ — L. V. C.

ROMANS CHAPTER ELEVEN – Commentary

ALL the foregoing is the prelude to the question which is proposed in and answered in chapter 11: “HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?” No, Paul replies, else how comes it that I a Jew, am converted? If Israel has been wholly cast away, I myself would be cast away with them. My individual salvation proves this great fact: GOD HATH NOT CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE WHICH HE FOREKNEW.

As clearly as it is possible for anyone to prove anything, Paul declares in his answer (speaking as moved by the Holy Ghost) that *the Israel* which is not cast away is the Election of Grace, and that this is the ALL ISRAEL of verse 26. “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Vs. 5).

Israel (the rejected nation) “hath not obtained that which he sought, BUT THE ELECTION HATH OBTAINED IT AND THE REST WERE BLINDED” (Vs. 7). The apostle in verses 2-4 uses the case of Elijah to prove that the true Israel always existed as a remnant, and not as a nation. The nation was, and is, and always will be, composed on the one hand of those who are elected to glory, and on the other those who are blinded (hardened).

The hardening of earthly Israel because of unbelief is confirmed by quotes from Isaiah 29:10, and Psalms 69:22. God gives them the spirit of slumber that they should not see nor hear. Their Old Testament privileges, ordinances and promises become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block to them. This became Israel’s grave. The unbelieving nation was ensnared by its own privileges. They relied on their birth certificates rather than God-wrought repentance and faith. They proudly flaunted their national origin in Abraham—“we be Abraham’s children and were never in bondage to any man” (John 8:33). So their boast became their grave and will remain so, though the majority of evangelicals and futurists the world over stand outside their tomb and shout down into their darkened vault the very texts of Scripture which put them there. This is what our opponents have been doing for the last 100 years and before, and in the process have perverted the true study and understanding of Holy Scripture.

“Have they stumbled that they should fall?” (Vs. 11). That is, has God no other end to serve in the judgment which has overtaken them than that of their destruction? “By no means” is the apostle’s reply. The product of their fall is the riches of the world. The removal from the special nation clause, in the program of God has meant the opening of the door of grace on the grandest and most world-wide scale, to poor sinners of mankind everywhere. “Through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy.” This provoking to jealousy is not the provoking to emulation of vs. 14, but is a judgment of God upon the willfully hardened as in chapter 10:19, “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people and by a foolish nation will I anger you.”

Verse 12, “Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the gentiles, how much more their fullness?” Our opponents make much of this verse. They say it means that at some time yet future the Jews will be returned nationally to their former privileges, be converted as a nation, and as a consequence the Gentile world will be enriched beyond anything that has ever taken place during the last two thousand plus years of Christian history. They say that this fulfillment of prophecy applies to a period richer and fuller in scope than that of Pentecost.

Now we do not hesitate to say that the text says no such thing. What enjoyment of Gospel blessings is there on this earth beyond beholding the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the privilege of every true believer now under the new Covenant of Grace? Are they claiming that *numbers* will make the difference? Numbers of converts will not make Christ more precious to the seeking sinner that leans on Him now in this day of famine. He whom our soul loveth comes in the night-time as well as the day and declares, “I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys,” and beneath His shadow we rest with great delight and find His fruit sweet to taste.

Paul's purpose is far otherwise than what our opponents claim here. When he says, "How much more their fullness," he is not pointing to a future race of Jews, but to himself, as representing a part of that fullness—a fullness then existing in his day; not something to be waited for till the end of 2,000+ years. His argument is, "If the national rejection of Israel has meant great blessing to the world at large, how much more blessing will it be when out of the nation of Israel comes a steady stream of Jewish converts, an election of grace to join the main stream of Divine election flowing from the Gentile world? This is indeed Life from the dead."

Verse 13, "I magnify mine office." This statement by Paul proves that this is the true meaning of "their fullness." He points not to a future generation of millennial Jews but to the elect remnant in Israel which was powerful then, and has endured in every generation since, and will to the end of time.

The Holy Ghost presents Paul to his hearers in this verse as the apostle of the Gentiles, and magnifies his office therein, thus indicating the blessing bestowed on the world by God's usage of this one Jew. Paul's abundant labors, his fruitful ministry, his vast understanding of the mystery of God, his clear revealing of the gospel and his defense of Gentile liberty against all the encroachments of sly Judaizers who crept in unawares to spy out and to destroy the peace and quiet of the churches by their Jewish pride and envy. This is THE FULLNESS OF ISRAEL coming into the Gospel church. To this day we read the Holy Scriptures which came to us entirely through men of Israel whom Christ called and equipped and sent to establish His church and lay its foundations in every land.

This is the riches of the world coming in through the "fullness" of Israel. Let those who take a derogatory view of Church history and give it an almost contemptible comparison with what may be expected when Jewry as a nation is converted (as they maintain), reckon with the labors of the Apostle Paul. Let them come forth and tell us that those apostolic labors will pale into insignificance beside the fabulous results of Jewish ministry in an age yet to come. But *what Bible* are those who make such claims reading?

SOME OF THEM—NOT ALL. Verse 14, "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." This is the emulation of following a good and noble example. Having presented himself and his own conversion as part of the continuing "fullness" of earthly Israel during the long Gospel day, he holds out to his benighted countrymen that same destiny which he enjoys, if by any means some might hear and perceive and be saved. Let his countrymen consider for themselves the super-abundant mercy of God in Christ and see that the crowning and the fullness of their destiny also lies in that Kingdom of Grace over which the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, and ever will reign, world without end.

Not that Paul expected his example to provoke a national acceptance of Christ. He was far too spiritually informed to commit so gross an error. "That I might save SOME OF THEM" — Paul knew nothing of national salvation. As God's penman he wrote chapters 9 through 11 to eliminate such an error.

Verse 15: "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." It is quite evident that those referred to as "them" who are cast away, are a different people from the "them" who are received. Our friends fail to distinguish between the nation of 2,000+ years ago and the nation which is yet to be, but at least they must acknowledge they are not the same individuals. But what they fail to see is that the two peoples in the text are NOT separated by 2,000 years at all, BUT ARE CONTEMPORARY.

The unbelieving majority of the nation is contrasted with the believing minority—that remnant according to the election of grace of which, again, Paul presents himself as a sample.

That some should be saved from the ruin of Israel—this is indeed life from the dead. For our friends to allege that “life from the dead” does not refer to Israel at all but to Gentiles becoming converted in unbelievable numbers through Israelitish testimony after the nation is “restored,” would be beyond exegetical credence if we had not seen it numerous times in print. A high percentage of expositors, both now and years gone by, have made this error.

No, NOT ALL JEWS ARE REJECTED. Verse 16: “For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy so are the branches.” Paul is stating the same thing in different words. He is showing that it is not his teaching that the rejection of the nation from its privileges meant likewise the rejection of every individual in the nation. Let not the Gentiles glory therefore over the Jewish nation because the Jewish privileges had become forfeited through unbelief. The fall of the nation did not mean there was no life remaining therein. That of which the first fruit was but a sample must be the same in its substance and nature. The salvation of individual Jews was to be expected to continue in accord with the Apostle’s position at the beginning of the discussion—“Hath God cast away His people?” God’s working salvation in earthly Israel continues as it did from the beginning. *The election of grace remaineth.*

That which springs from the same root must be the same nature and substance. If the one is holy so is the other. Many commentators, ancient and modern, try to fit this into their pattern of pre-conceived notions of Jewish restoration. Their attempt to describe how and in what sense unbelieving Israel is holy though lost and rejected, is ludicrous. There can be only one meaning. Those of the rejected nation who bring forth the fruits of God-given faith evidence thereby that they are the *true children of Abraham*. They are the holy seed of a holy stock. The unbelieving portion of the nation is reprobate, never was holy, and is not to be considered as the rightful seed of Abraham. Our Lord said to them, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44).

Only individuals are in view. Verse 17: “And if some of the branches were broken off and thou ... grafted in among them.” Here is confirmation of our exegesis. All of earthly Israel were not cast away—only the unbeliever, “some of the branches.” What could be plainer than this—that the apostle is speaking of *individual believers* throughout this great chapter? “Some of the branches,” dear reader; not all of them were broken off. The holy stock was not uprooted, just “some of the branches.” Even though history has proven that the old stock was well nigh stripped of its natural branches, there still remained God’s chosen remnant according to the election of grace.

This is borne out by the remainder of the verse as Paul turns to the Gentile believers. You Gentiles believers were grafted in among them, but he does not say the *nations* of the Gentiles.

Not nations but individual believers from among the Gentiles! There is no record of any Gentile nation from the foundation of the world being grafted into the Divine covenant. Only individuals are in view. Let our opponents tell us from this verse, who are the branches which have been grafted into the Abrahamic stem to partake of the root and the fatness of the Covenant of Grace in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as national salvation either of Jew or Gentile—no, not since the foundation of the world, and never even in a minor sense in the family and immediate descendants of the first and second generations of the Abrahamic stock. Ishmael was never in, nor Esau, nor half the sons of Jacob. Read what their father, Jacob, says of them on his deathbed in Genesis 49.

After the above there is not much need to say a lot on verses 18-24, the analogy of the olive tree and the graft. Gentile believers must resist the temptation to boast against rejected Israel, for they, like Israel before them, stand only by faith and unless their faith is proven to be genuine evangelical faith, they would suffer the same fate (as individuals), as the reprobate Jew—and for the same cause. If the Jew abides not still in unbelief he will be grafted in again. If the Gentile abides not in faith he will be cut out. But the absurdity of saying that this is a NATIONAL grafting, cutting out, and re-grafting, must be self evident for Paul is not speaking to nations but to individuals.

Verse 25: “I would not brethren that ye should be ignorant of this mystery lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.” It is “*brethren*” not *nations* whom he is addressing.

Those commentators who write of “the end of Gentile Christianity,” as though the Gentile nations were enjoying the benefits of the Israelitish olive tree, are estranged from all reality, for no Gentile nation was ever in that position. The only nation ever grafted into Christ is that described by Peter: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy NATION, a peculiar people” (I Peter 2:9). This is the nation of *God’s elect*, chosen from every land, region, people and tongue. This nation will never be “broken off,” though individuals professing to be of it but by their fruits proving they are false professors WILL BE.

“That blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” The Holy Ghost tells us two things here: (1) That Israel’s blindness always was in part only—that is, *the whole nation* was not blind but a part thereof. Paul was an example of the part which was not blind. It is total folly for commentators to say the “in part” means a period of time. No, the first verse proves otherwise for, “The election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded.” (2) The lasting nature of that condition of “blindness” which had befallen the greater part of the nation. The word “until” no more means that the time is coming when Israel will be no more blind, than the same word in Psalm 110:1 means that Christ will cease to reign after his foes are made His footstool.

If we take vs. 25 the way our opponents would have it, we run into a big contradiction. They have been busy telling us in their writings that when Israel is restored, the Gentiles will reap such a benefit as will dwarf out of recognition all that they ever enjoyed during the period of their dominance. Our opponents cannot have it both ways. Israel (according to them) will not be restored till Gentile “fullness” has been achieved. Yet they maintain that Gentile salvation so far from being “FULL” at the restoration of Jewry, will only enter upon a fuller, more glorious phase than ever before. Look, reader, at this gross inconsistency. This is what they are saying: Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in—and then, with the salvation of Israel a greater fullness than ever shall be awarded to the Gentiles. This text in no way means that.

The *fullness* of the Gentiles will coincide with the end of the world and the day of judgment, and Israel’s “blindness in part” endures till then without respite. Our friends do not seem to be aware that the word “until” often bears in Holy Scripture a durative sense, and not that of temporal limitation. Hence Christ reigns till all His foes are made His footstool, then goes right on reigning. Romans 11:25 teaches ultimacy and contains no suggestion of any alteration in Israel’s national status. The present boundaries of God’s Divine Decree are unalterable. The blindness in part must endure till the end of time, which time is coincident with the fullness of Gentile salvation.

Romans 11:26: “And so all Israel shall be saved: As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” It is a fundamental error of our opponents that they make this verse dependent upon the previous verse. It is not a dependent verse at all, but a summary (summing up), a *grand condensation* and verdict upon this discussion which began with chapter 9, verse 1. We cannot allow our opponents to make out Paul to be inconsistent with himself. This verse must be interpreted according to consistent Pauline doctrine of the heavenly nature of *the true Israel, the Church of the Redeemed* and of the *Firstborn* whose names are written in Heaven.

In the Pauline doctrine the N.T. Church is the last and final phase of all God’s dealings in history. *There is nothing after the Church.* Eph. 3:10-11, “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God: according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” In this Pauline doctrine (given him by the Holy Ghost), Zion or Mount Zion is the Church and not earthly Israel. Heb. 12:22, “Ye are come to mount Zion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.” Gal. 4:26, “Jerusalem WHICH IS ABOVE is free, which is the mother of us all” (i.e. Jew and Gentile). Compare this with what our Lord says in John 4:21 about earthly Jerusalem. Some of our opponents concede that *Zion* in Romans 11:26 cannot mean the earthly Jerusalem and must be taken in the figurative or spiritual sense. Then, in order to suit their theory, they say that the second part of the sentence is literal (“shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob”). One good thing my professors taught me in college is the practice of the Hebrew authors in duplicating expressions for the purpose of emphasis. Yet our opponents persist in setting one phase of this quote of Isaiah against another when clearly the one is the amplification of the other.

If they persist in saying that *Zion* does not mean *Zion*, then consistency demands that they say *Jacob* does not mean *Jacob*. To do so would destroy their theory, their books and writings, for this, dear reader, is the verse of verses to them. Upon this verse they rely totally for their N.T. proof of a “Restoration of Israel.” They betray themselves with their own confusion and inconsistency. As another has said, “We fear that our friends exhibit not only a fatal exegetical inconsistency, but a complete ignorance of Hebrew poetical style.”

But our task is a thorough exposition of this verse showing: (1) Verse 26 is not dependent upon the preceding verses but it is a summary of the entire argument of the preceding 3 chapters; (2) The words, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” are to be interpreted by what follows, “As it is written.”

We have already laid down as a self-evident fact number (1), but by way of reminder we add the following: If Paul were speaking of all earthly Israel being saved, how could he have begun his argument in chapter 9 with that so mysterious, moving, shocking, and agonizing cry, “I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” This agony would be *meaningless* if the Apostle already knew that “all Israel (earthly) was going to be saved anyway.” His agony over the rejection of the earthly Israel was real and prophetic. It was of the same order as that of Jeremiah when he cursed the day of his birth, that he was called into being to be the bearer of such ill-tidings as he was forced to convey concerning the destruction of his people (Jer. 20:14-18). The intense grief of both men over the fate of earthly Israel is the strongest possible proof that Israel has been rejected totally as a people, and has ceased forever to be the channel of Divine Grace.

Paul's grief is total and its cause irremediable. Our opponents make of it a farce as they say it is the starting point of a discussion which is designed to prove that the nation has not been cast away but is destined to a more glorious future than ever in the past.

No, Paul knew that the earthly nation had been rejected and that the Spiritual Israel (*all the elect*) must be saved. We now proceed to show that the words "**All Israel shall be saved**" are to be understood by what follows—and what follows is a quotation from Isaiah 59: 20-21. We ask readers to open their Bibles (**King James Version**) at that Scripture as we proceed. Remember that as a rule our opponents end their expositions of Romans 11 at verse 26 ignoring verse 27 which contains a further portion of the Isaiah prophecy. Isaiah 59 graphically describes the awful failure of Israel to fulfill the function allotted to it. Paul makes a quotation from this chapter in Romans 3 that shows that Israel is an unqualified sharer in the universal guilt of the human race, despite its unique privileges (compare Isa. 59:7-8 and Rom. 3:15-17).

The prophet Isaiah (in this chapter, verses 16-19) describes how it is the marvel of heaven that the sinful nation exhibited no sign of repentance. There was no intercessor, and none to take up the righteous cause of God. So the Lord arms Himself for the task, but the goal He sets Himself is utterly beyond the destiny of a small nation like Israel. The Lord girds Himself for a far mightier task, that of establishing a *worldwide* domain. While taking a fearful vengeance on the evildoers of Israel and indeed of all His foes, He decrees that from the rising to the setting sun He will establish in Christ a Gospel dominion which shall never end and which, by reason of its very nature, cannot fail. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59:19). Quite properly this eminent sentence is used to cover all eventualities in the history of the Lord's people. Its primary intention however should be obvious—it describes the coming in of the Gospel salvation at a time when Satanic power had reached its zenith. Then it was that Christ appeared and made a complete atonement for His people, dying upon the Cross and rising again as Conqueror over the tomb. His ascension to the right hand of power to begin His eternal reign was the signal for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The figure of the flood and the overcoming power of the Spirit is borrowed in the case of the mystic woman of Revelation 12, who after the birth of Christ (Rev. 12:5) flees into the wilderness where she is prophetically sustained. The serpent (Satan) casts out of his mouth water as a flood to destroy the woman, but is foiled by the intervention of the Lord's providence. The flood is the means employed by Satan to destroy the Church, whether by false doctrine or open persecution.

The "woman" here is the Church of the Old and New Testaments. This is fixed by the first verse where she is considered as being clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and a crown of 12 stars on her head. The moon is the reflected light of the Old Testament and the sun is the great Gospel day in its continuity. The 12 stars are the symbol of the church in her dual form under the two Testaments—the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles of the Lamb. The man Child is Christ who comes midway in the history of the Church at the dividing point of the two Testaments, the Church of all ages being both the means of His entry into the world, and the Kingdom of Grace which was the consequence of His coming.

Here is another proof that the Church is the same in O.T. and N.T. times and that it is now constituted of Jews and Gentiles as the sole and legitimate heirs to the promises made to Abraham. Rev. 12 thus becomes a Divine Commentary upon Isaiah 59 and a further preparation for the understanding of *who Israel is* in Isa. 59:20 and Rom. 11:26. To that point we have now come.

“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD” (Isa. 59:20). Paul says in 11:26, “There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” This is a free translation into the Greek of the Hebrew text. The Redeemer Who comes to Zion is the One also who proceeds from Zion, and those who turn from transgression in Jacob are those who, by sovereign grace, are turned from their ungodliness by the power of Christ our Lord. There is a specific limitation in Isaiah, of the Redeemer’s work: “to them that turn from transgression in Jacob.” Paul sees these repentant ones as the whole of Jacob, the election of grace. Some Premil writers that take Zion in a symbolic sense and Jacob in a literal sense meet a serious embarrassment here, for they do not believe that Jacob means the whole of Jews in the days of the alleged Restoration. Some admit that not all Israel (after the flesh) shall be saved but only a token number so as to make it appear that the nation as a whole has turned from its unbelief. They appear to be satisfied if the number of the converted in Jacob shall amount to ten percent of the whole.

Allowing for the fact that they derive this conclusion from a succession of commentators covering the whole of the Reformed period, we believe it shows embarrassment for all these commentators who begin with the preconceived idea of a *Jewish restoration* which they try to fit in with Romans 11:26. Other and more extreme futurists and dispensationalists declare that “all” means “all”—a conclusion that we share with them in this case, only we declare that the text does not refer to Jews alone at the end of time, but to God’s elect in all time! The futurists have their own peculiar difficulties which they have never honestly faced. They do not really believe that “all” means ALL, or they would have to include Judas Iscariot and Caiaphas, Jeroboam, Ahab and the Baal worshippers, and every other Israelite who ever lived, in a *universal Israelite* salvation regardless of their evil nature. If “all Israel” means what it says in a Jewish sense, then no Israelite of any age can be excluded.

The only consistent interpretation of Romans 11:26 is that which we have had the privilege to advance, namely that the Holy Spirit is speaking of the election of grace here and also in Isaiah, that ALL means ALL, and that the prophetic word embraces the entire field of redemption according to that glorious word in Isa. 35:10—“The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.” That Isaiah’s word is a Gospel word and has nothing to do with the Restoration of the Jew as such, is further borne out by his following verse (59:21): “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.” Paul quotes from this verse also in Rom. 11:27, “For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

It is obvious that Isa. 59:21 relates to the same subject as Romans 11:27. The people mentioned in verse 21 as “thy seed” are the Zion and the Jacob of verse 20. Hence Paul also makes the same essential connection in Romans 11, that the “All Israel” who shall be saved are the *covenant people* whose sins are taken away, these and no one else. Who are these covenant people, “thy seed, and thy seed’s seed,” from whom the Word of Covenant life shall not depart for ever? These cannot be descriptive of the earthly Israel, else there is no equivalent promise anywhere in the Old Testament upon which the Church of our Lord can rely. In short this verse is THE OPENING OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

The words in this text are not addressed either to Jew or Gentile. They are addressed to CHRIST, the Mediator of the New Covenant Who acts always on behalf of those whom the

Father hath given Him (John 17:2). The Covenant is made primarily with Christ Who fulfills its terms and seals it with His Own Blood (Matt.26:28; Heb. 13:20). God's elect are brought into the covenant by His grace acting through the Spirit of Regeneration. This is expressed in the text, "My Spirit that is upon thee (that is, upon Christ, the Mediator) and my words which I have put into thy mouth (that is, the word of grace and salvation) shall not depart out of thy mouth (Christ shall never cease to be the Mediator of His people) nor out of the mouth of thy seed (that is, His elect shall hear and be effectually called from sin and death to life eternal and shall persevere in grace unto the end), nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed (the succession of the generations of the saved to the end of time) from henceforth and for ever."

Isaiah 53:10 tells us that the elect are Christ's "seed" whom He shall "see" (that is, they shall be infallibly saved and preserved by grace). So should Christ see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied (Isa. 53:11 and John 17:24). That this covenant is not applicable to earthly Israel is clear from the context which makes it a worldwide economy of the election of grace. It is clear that Zion is the Church and Jacob is that whole election of grace. And by his usage of Isa. 59 as the conclusion of his discussion in Romans chapters 9-11, Paul clearly shows what he means by the word "AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED." In short he teaches that salvation is limited to the election of grace, and that the election of grace is the worldwide and age long Kingdom of the Mediator Christ; therefore Israel is not, and by no stretch of the imagination can be made to mean, the nation of Jewry, present or to come. This is the Church of Christ in which all distinction of Jew and Gentile is for ever obliterated and forgotten. Those who do not accept this conclusion undermine the entire conception of the Everlasting Covenant of Grace which is the only instrument in view in these collateral writings of Isaiah and the apostle Paul.

Reader, the case is proved. Let who will dissent. But let them beware that in defending natural Israel they are fighting against God's election and His sovereign purpose that His promises are yea and amen IN CHRIST. There is not the slightest hint in this chapter (11) of any return of Israel to an earthly Palestine. The only promises contained therein are of spiritual salvation, forgiveness of sin, regeneration by the Spirit. Let us, dear reader, stop and worship here because of God's sovereign, elective grace in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The concluding verses of Romans 11 describe the state of Jewish and Gentile salvation during the last 2,000+ years. Verse 28 teaches that, as concerning the Gospel (that instrument of Grace by which a new "nation" composed of Jew and Gentile has been called out to take the place of disinherited national Israel)—as becoming that Gospel the Jewish nation has become an enemy of God, but as touching the election (that portion of the nation which is saved while the rest are blinded), they are and ever will be beloved for the fathers' sakes. Being eager to clutch at any straw to establish the idea of Jewish privilege unaltered by any fact of history or prophetic act of God, the opponents of what is here set forth will attempt to say that the "election" of verse 28 is not the same election of grace as in verse 5. Seeing their theory falling to the ground they make an unscriptural attempt to ward off the fatal blow by saying this is only the "natural election" of the Jew to his original privileges. Such a position ignores the individual salvation of the hapless Jew who lives between A.D. 70 and whatever other date they deem to be convenient.

They fall into even greater problems, however, because the word is, "As touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." What they are trying to say is that because the Jews are the direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the nation *as a nation* is still elect and beloved by God. What kind of "love" is this which condemns an embittered, ungodly nation of proud unbelievers to 2,000+ years of dire judgment, temporal and eternal? Is this to be

“beloved for the fathers’ sakes?” No, for the apostle consistently uses the word “election” throughout this chapter, this epistle and all his writings as pertaining to all God’s chosen ones, Jew and Gentile. This verse is speaking as descriptive of that continuing “remnant according to the election of grace” of which the apostle had spoken a few verses before. These are truly beloved for the fathers’ sakes, as they are grafted back in generation after generation, into the Olive Tree of the everlasting covenant of the Divine mercy in Christ, that the light of Abraham in his earthly seed might not be altogether gone out.

Verse 29: “*For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*” This is proven by the continuing and sure mercy of God to all the elect, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Will our opponents deny that this calling is “effectual calling” and “final perseverance”? Are they going to say that this is a *national* gift and calling to the earthly Jew? Where is the evidence of it in 2,000+ years past, and what worth is it to those countless millions of Jews who have perished in unbelief during that period of time—a period that has lasted longer than their previous “national history”? These Gentile friends of Jewry must do much better than this. And they actually preach such?

Verses 30-31: “*For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*” The Gentile mercy is the free gospel grace extended to the elect of all nations in Christ. The Jewish remnant of believers (as an election of grace indeed) have obtained mercy at the *same place* where it is freely opened to the elect Gentiles. There is, for both, a common mercy seat where all questions of birth and privilege are obliterated, and where they are received who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:13). That order will never be put aside, and under it the Jew can never regain his lost precedence!

Verse 32: “*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all.*” All the world, Jew and Gentile, has been shut up together in a state of unbelief, that all the elect, regardless of national origin or who their earthly fathers were, may obtain free salvation the same way, by God’s free grace in Christ alone. Notice there is no precedence, privilege or national history here.

Vs. 33-36: “*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out? For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*” This marvelous chapter concludes with one of the grandest perorations in all literature, human or Divine, as Paul praises and extols the vast wisdom of God in thus working out through all the history of our race, a sure, perfect and eternal salvation, to the praise of the glory of Divine Grace eternally. Amen and Amen. — **Lynn V. Connell**

[This concludes our exposition of Romans 11, with reference to the Jewish question, for the time being. May God bless and use all that is in accord with His precious Truth.]